category of population, the Prime Minister announced the "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" on 25th December, 2000. The Scheme envisages identification of one crore poorest of the poor families from amongst the estimated number of BPL families and providing them with subsidized foodgrains at the rate of Rs. 2 a kg for wheat and Rs. 3 a kg for rice. The entitlement of foodgrains for Antyodaya families has been further increased to 35 kg from 25 kg per family per month for a period of one year *i.e.* 31.3.2003.

Failure of PDS

2692. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Public Distribution System conceived during perpetual food deficiencies period has now lost its relevance;

(b) if so, whether Government are thinking of any other such mechanism where economically weaker consumers are not adversely affected farmers interests are not jeopardized and the element of subsidies is considerable reduced; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir. The Public Distribution System (PDS) network has served the country well and is an important instrument of the Government to enhance food security, specially for people below the poverty line.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Do not arise.